



79: Are You Gonna Be My Girl by cali-chan

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[March 11th, 2013]

Mike looked up from his laptop when his daughter entered the kitchen. "Hi, Dad," she said, her dark, curly ponytail swinging behind her as she opened the fridge and pulled out the milk.

"Morning, sweetheart," Mike mumbled, his gaze going back to his computer screen as she walked around the table where he was sitting in search of a bowl and a box of Frosted Flakes. He'd been promoted recently, which meant the number of emails he received (and had to attend to) before breakfast had tripled from one day to the next.

Annie set her bowl down on the table and took a seat directly in front of him as she poured milk on her cereal. He could feel her eyes on him as she ate, the crunching sound of her chewing distracting him from his reading every other sentence. "Hey, Dad?" she started, sounding slightly unsure.

"Yes?"

There was a pause before she spoke again. "How do you ask a girl to be your girlfriend?"

The unexpectedness of the question startled him away from his work, and he peered at her over the edge of his laptop screen to find her staring back at him, big brown eyes— so much like her mother's— fixed on him expectantly.

He was surprised she was even coming to him for stuff like this. Not

that she wouldn't come to him for anything— they were very close. She was his firstborn, his little girl; he adored her with every beat of his heart, and she enthusiastically returned that adoration. They could talk about pretty much anything, and shared quite a few interests to the point that every once in a while they'd make plans to hang out, just the two of them, and always had tons of fun. He didn't know very many sixteen-year-olds who routinely, voluntarily hung out with their parents just for kicks, so it was something he had always been particularly proud of.

But when it came to teenage stuff, like high school drama and cliques and crushes, she tended to go to her mother, or her Aunt Nancy or her Uncle Will, depending on what the particular topic was. He chalked it up to the fact that it was probably embarrassing to talk about that kind of stuff with your father, or perhaps she just recognized that he was too socially inept to be able to offer any decent advice (which, granted, he was, so he tried not to take it as an insult).

He was shocked the question had come to him. In reality, he had been sort of relieved that he wasn't likely to deal with relationship stuff until it was his son doing the asking— and Jimmy was still in the "girls have cooties" stage, despite being almost a teen himself.

Then again, he was probably the only adult in her circle of possible confidants who had direct experience when it came to dating girls. He really should've seen it coming. "Oh," he responded, dumbly. "Um, I actually... don't... know..." he admitted somewhat sheepishly.

She tilted her head and narrowed her eyes at him, and it reminded him of Nancy back in the day, when she used to glare at him when he tattled on her to their parents. "Come on, Dad," she said with a roll of her eyes. "You know it's no different."

"I know that!" he retorted, mostly only a little defensive, but also a tiny bit offended that she would even suggest he didn't. "Come on, give me some credit here. I just meant that— well— I... don't think I ever asked...?" It came out more as a question than as a statement, and he cringed. He honestly couldn't remember. That was bad, wasn't it?

Her jaw dropped and, yep, he was in trouble. "No! Dad!" She shook her head and pointed an accusing finger at him. "You get *zero* credit. That is such a fail!"

"What's a fail?" Eleven asked as she entered the kitchen, dropping a kiss on Annie's head and another on Mike's cheek before heading over to the cupboards to get a mug. She was wearing the usual type of semi-casual clothing she generally wore for work, her brown hair pulled into a professional chignon at the back of her head. She usually waited until after breakfast to do her makeup, so her face was still fresh from her shower.

Mike leaned back in his chair so he could look at her over his shoulder. "Did I ever actually ask you to be my girlfriend?"

El moved to pour herself some coffee from the carafe that Mike had set to brew when he first woke up, apparently unaware that she was leaving the two of them hanging on a longer-than-necessary dramatic pause. Once her mug was full, she put the carafe back in place and turned around, leaning against the counter. "You know, I don't think you ever did," she concluded before taking a sip of her coffee.

"Oh, for *shame*, Dad!" Annie exclaimed, somewhere between shocked and amused. She shook her head as she picked up her spoon and set out to finish the rest of her (now depressingly soggy) cereal. "How does that even happen?"

Mike shrugged, adjusting his glasses before sneaking a glance at the time on his computer screen. "I don't know. It's just... we started hanging out together, just the two of us, and eventually that became dating, and people sort of just assumed that we were going steady, and... I guess we just went with it," he explained, because, really, it was that simple.

Annie shook her head again. "You two are so strange," she declared, looking at them like they were a couple of weirdos (which, granted, they were, so he tried not to take it as an insult).

He looked back at his wife just in time to see her hide a smile behind her mug; then, he went back to skimming through his emails. She walked around the table toward the fridge, which she opened to pull

out a loaf of sliced bread. "Is your brother awake?" she asked Annie as she closed the fridge.

"How am I supposed to know?" Annie replied as she finished her breakfast.

"Because his bedroom is right next to yours...?" El suggested as the teenager stood up to put her now-empty bowl in the dishwasher.

"He's probably still asleep," Mike asserted, handing Annie the box of cereal she'd left forgotten on the table so she could put it back in the pantry. Their youngest could probably sleep through a nuclear holocaust; fortunately for him, he also had a knack for getting ready super quickly, so despite them having this exact conversation nearly every other weekday morning, he was very rarely late to school.

"Don't forget to let me know if you have practice after school," El reminded their daughter, loaf of bread still in her hands as she waited for Annie to be done with the dishwasher so she could put her food in the toaster.

"My phone died yesterday, remember?" Annie pointed out, and Mike was reminded that she'd asked him to look at it, to check if it was salvageable or if she was better off asking for a new one for her birthday. He'd put the damaged device on his desk so he wouldn't forget... and then he forgot.

"Well, you can let me know some *other* way," Eleven stressed with a pointed look, not taking no for an answer. Annie had a bad habit of forgetting to let them know when she wasn't coming home directly after school, which never failed to make them worry— especially now that she had her driver's license and saw it as a symbol of ultimate freedom. "We've talked about this."

The teen rolled her eyes but relented. "Okay, I'll chime in," she promised, moving to give her mother a kiss on the cheek. "Bye, Mama."

"Have a good day," Eleven said as the girl similarly gave Mike a kiss on the cheek with a quick "Bye, Dad."

"Hey, wait. Who was that question all about?" he hurried to ask her as she picked up her messenger bag and swung it across her torso. Annie was fairly social, so she often hung out with lots of girls. Other than her best friend, Sandra (who, last he heard, had a boyfriend), he wasn't sure there was any one girl in particular she'd been spending time with. Now he was feeling left out of the loop.

"I'll let you guess," Annie teased as she left the kitchen, pausing at the bottom of the stairs to yell at her brother. "Jimmy, if you're not in the car in the next five minutes, I'm leaving without you!" Without waiting for a reply, she walked out of the house, her car keys jingling as she closed the front door behind her.

Mike looked at his wife as she moved toward the toaster. "Do you know what that was about?"

"Nope," she replied as she opened the plastic bag that contained the bread.

"You'd tell me if you did know, right?"

He saw her shake her head in amusement. "Of course, silly." She paused only for a second to give him a playful flick on the back of his head before depositing four slices of bread into the toaster. He took off his glasses and rubbed his eyes as he heard her tinker around behind him, pulling plates out of the cupboards and jars of jam out of the pantry.

Deciding his emails could wait, he stood up and went to her, wrapping his arms around her waist from behind and pulling her close. "So," he whispered in her ear, dropping a kiss on her cheek that she leaned into, "what do you say? Do you want to be my girlfriend?"

"Hmmm," she pretended to think about it for a minute. "Only if we get to make out behind the bleachers," she said as she turned around in his arms and draped hers loosely over his shoulders. He could tell she was trying to say this with a straight face, but the corners of her mouth were betraying her.

"Huh." Now it was his turn to pretend to be pondering her words. "I guess that could be arranged," he declared, before leaning in and

kissing her. He could feel her smile against his lips for a second before she kissed him back with fervor.

With two kids and full-time careers, it was difficult for them to get much quality time to themselves, so whenever they got little moments like these, in-between the craziness of day-to-day life, he was definitely going to take advantage.

It was almost shocking to him that even after, what, nearly thirty years of knowing each other now? That even after such a long time of being together, he still got as much of a thrill out of kissing his wife as he did that first time in the gymnasium of Hawkins Middle School. Her touch still made his heart race just as it had the first time they made love on top of his *Star Wars* bedsheets back at his parents' home.

It hadn't been an easy road for them— even when they *weren't* uncovering government conspiracies and fighting interdimensional creatures— but even with all the people they'd met and all the experiences they'd lived through the years, Eleven remained the most amazing person he had ever known. His best friend, his greatest supporter, his soul mate, his partner in... everything.

Even in his forties, after years of marriage and routines and raising children together, it still caught him by surprise sometimes that she had chosen him, of all people, to share her life with. It was the greatest honor of his life. Eleven was the best thing that ever happened to him; she had changed his life completely, made him happier than he'd ever been, gave him a family of their own. And he felt that more keenly than ever when he had her in his arms like this.

The toaster popped up, startling them a bit just as they pulled back, but he didn't let that deter him, going back in again to nip at her delectable neck. She hummed contently, stretching her neck to give him more access, but still warned, "You're going to be late."

He sighed against the lobe of her ear, somewhat peeved that she had to bring it up. "I'm CTO. I don't have to get to the office *exactly* on time." He inhaled deeply against the joint of her jaw; she smelled fresh, the scent of soap from her shower clinging to her skin.

She laughed and pulled back slightly, so she could look him in the eye. "Are you going to keep bragging about the CTO thing forever?" she asked him, amused, raising an eyebrow pointedly.

"...Yeah, probably," he admitted with a shrug and an impish smile.

"Good. You deserve it." She cupped his cheek in her hand and leaned forward to kiss him again, lingering for just a second. "I'm proud of you."

"So you've said," he mumbled under his breath as he nuzzled his nose against hers. "You wanna show me just how proud you are?" He wiggled his eyebrows and she snort-laughed, an adorable sound he then muffled with his own lips.

"Sure," she responded to his suggestion, still chuckling, when they pulled back. "Some other morning when I don't have an appointment in twenty minutes." She laughed when he groaned, disappointed. Then she gave him one last kiss to make up for it, which he accepted with gusto.

Unfortunately for him, the embrace was cut short by a loud "Eww! Do you have to do that here?" in that absolutely disgusted tone only a twelve-year-old could pull off. El pulled back abruptly, pursing her lips—whether to hold onto the feeling of the kiss or just to keep herself from laughing, he wasn't sure—and Mike groaned again, dropping his head against her shoulder.

Still holding onto him, El turned to their youngest, who was standing by the pantry door grimacing in their direction, like he caught them being lovey-dovey all the time (which, granted, he did, but Mike was still definitely going to take it as an insult). His dark hair was sticking up in all directions like he hadn't bothered to even look himself in the mirror, but apart from that he seemed ready for school, backpack already on his shoulder. "Well," Eleven started in a practical manner, "technically this is *our* house. You just happen to live here."

Jimmy rolled his eyes at them in an exaggeratedly dramatic fashion. "Why can't you just be like all the other normal parents and secretly hate each other?" he muttered with a huff before pulling open the pantry and taking out a breakfast bar. He gave them one last *look*

before turning around and heading for the door.

"Have a good day, sweetie!" El called out as he walked out, but the only response was the main door slamming closed behind him.

"I think he's been spending too much time with your dad," Mike pointed out, looking in the direction his son had just left.

"No, I think the eye-rolling is all you," Eleven retorted, chuckling when he mock-glared at her. "They'll grow out of it," she assured him, before leaning in for one last peck. "Now, breakfast," she patted his shoulders, finally pulling out of his arms to gather their toast on a plate.

He grabbed the jam, a knife, and a couple of glasses and set them on the table. She set down the toast, her mug, and a bottle of orange juice before sitting down on the chair beside his own.

Before she could reach for a slice of toast, he pulled her hand toward him and softly kissed her knuckles. She smiled at him, that small smile he'd fallen in love with since they were twelve, her eyes shining with affection. Then he let go so she could grab her food, and moved to lower the lid of his laptop so he could have a quiet, quick breakfast with his wife before heading out to work.

Notes: I may have a thing for interrupting their kisses. Sorry. It's just so much fun! xD In the meantime, adult!Mike with glasses, amirite?

Annie is named after Anne Shirley from *Anne of Green Gables*. Jimmy is, of course, named after Hopper. CTO stands for Chief Technology Officer and is an executive-level position assigned to the person who leads the department(s) of a company that deal(s) with science and/or technology; kind of the executive equivalent of a Chief of Engineering.

Title of this fic comes from Jet's song of the same name, mostly because it pops into my head whenever the topic of anyone asking

anyone to be their girlfriend comes up. Also, March 11th is my birthday, so I had to use it; it fell on a Monday in 2013, btw. Happy Christmas to everyone celebrating this weekend!